

THE NORTH EAST CORNER

By Wor. Brother John S. Pells

The symbolism of the N.E.C. is of a diversified nature.

The C is first told of the position of the foundation stone in important buildings, and that he is placed in a similar situation to symbolize that he is laying the foundation of a new life. As all important buildings are usually dedicated for some particular purpose, the ceremony of laying the foundation stone becomes a form of consecration; and the implication exists that, not only is he laying the foundation of a new moral life, but he is consecrating that life as well.

The hope is expressed that the moral structure he will erect will be perfect in all its parts and honourable to the builder. As to whether it will become a superb structure, beautiful, strong and useful, or an unsightly, dangerous and useless ruin will depend entirely upon himself. He is being given the plan, and in due course he will receive the necessary Working Tools with which to construct the edifice—a life of service to his fellow men.

The manner in which the C stands should ever remind him that his new life is to one of rectitude—swerving not a hair's breadth from the upright course he must follow in order to bring to completion the structure he has undertaken to build.

“The man who is so conscious of the rectitude of his intentions as to be willing to open his bosom to the inspection of the world, is in possession of one of the strongest pillars of a decided character. The course of such a man will be firm and steady, because he has nothing to fear from the world, and is sure of the approbation and support of Heaven.” (W. Wirt).

It is not always remembered that the N.E.C. is neither N nor E, and that the very fact of placing the C in that spot is to symbolize that he has left the N—the place of darkness, and will ultimately arrive at the E—the place of light, the symbol of perfection in Masonic Life.

The lesson of Humility is also implied, for although the foundation stone proper is usually buried beneath the ground, if it is not properly prepared and well and truly laid, the structure which is built upon it cannot possibly conform to the plan. It will be out of line. So should the C bury his selfish instincts, and build upon them an edifice which will conform to the Divine Plan.

The life of service, to which the C has devoted himself, is an all embracing one. Not only is he to build his own moral structure, but, like the stones in the walls of a material temple, he is expected to give his aid to others, so that all the individual buildings may ultimately become one perfect temple, devoted to the service for which all temples have ever been constructed. This is the purpose of the Charity Charge.

The N.E.C. also reminds the C that at one time it was customary to sacrifice a life when laying a foundation stone, a custom still commemorated by the Corn, Wine and Oil used by Freemasons today.

So must the C's life be one not only of service, but of sacrifice when necessary.